UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 1 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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11 October 1991
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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Group of Eastern European States and the Group of Asian States had nominated Mr. Barac (Romania) and Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran), respectively, for the post of Vice-Chairman, and that the Group of African States had nominated Mr. Rakotonaivo (Madagascar) for the post of Rapporteur.

2. Mr. Barac (Romania) and Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran) were elected Vice-Chairmen by acclamation.

3. Mr. Rakotonaivo (Madagascar) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/46/250, A/46/251; A/C.2/46/1; A/C.2/46/L.1 and Add.1)

4. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 20 September 1991 from the President of the General Assembly to the Chairman of the Second Committee (A/C.2/46/1) concerning the allocation of items to the Committee. He also drew attention to document A/C.2/46/L.1, containing the proposed draft programme of work prepared for the Committee by the Secretariat, and document A/C.2/46/L.1/Add.1 on the state of preparation of documentation.

5. He drew the Committee's attention to various actions taken by the General Assembly, based on the recommendations contained in the first report of the General Committee on the organization of the forty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, with a view to promoting efficiency and economy.

6. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, proposed that item 81, on the external debt crisis and development should be taken up after the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) had held their annual meetings in late October.

7. He suggested that the programme of work should be altered so that the items on emergency humanitarian assistance would be taken up after the general debate. While his delegation was aware that the Secretary-General's report on that cluster of items was not yet complete, it felt that the General Assembly could consider the report in plenary when it took up item 143 on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations.

8. Mr. FJAERTOFT (Norway) proposed that the Committee should consider item 77 (c) on the World Decade for Cultural Development after the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had held its discussions on the Decade in late October.

9. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said he endorsed the Netherlands proposal because interesting results could be expected from the forthcoming annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF at Bangkok.

10. He saw no reason, however, to postpone the consideration of item 83 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The report of the second meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee, held recently in Guatemala, was not complete, nor would it be by the beginning of October. The Special High-level Council would be holding a meeting before the end of the first fortnight in October. Japan would therefore prefer item 83 to be taken up on the dates envisaged in the programme of work.

11. Mr. OLISEMEKAL (Nigeria) said that, according to the proposed programme of work, items 78 and 79 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind would be taken up on the same dates as an African ministerial meeting on the environment which was to be held at Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). He proposed, therefore, that the consideration of those items should be postponed to 18-20 November and that on 11-13 November, the dates originally set for their consideration, informal consultations should be held on those items.

12. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) endorsed the Nigerian proposal concerning items 78 and 79. Concerning the cluster consisting of items 82 (Operational activities for development) and 88 (Human resources development), his delegation proposed that the items in question should be taken up earlier since they had always been the subject of lengthy and complicated debates. His delegation was not suggesting any specific date, so that delegations would be able to hold the broadest possible consultations in that regard.

13. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, recalled that documents were supposed to be ready six weeks before the start of the debate. Since the Committee had a very heavy programme of work, an effort should be made to ensure that documents were distributed reasonably well in advance of the start of the consideration of each item. If that was not possible, the debate should be postponed.

14. Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community, endorsed the Ugandan proposal that the consideration of item 82 should be postponed and the Norwegian proposal that the debate on item 77 should be deferred until after the UNESCO meeting.

15. Mr. SETH (India) endorsed the proposal by the Group of 77. As far as item 81 was concerned, his delegation noted that the representatives of the European Community and Japan wanted the debate to be postponed. Since debt negotiations were usually arduous and prolonged, it would be advisable to wait until the World Bank and IMF concluded their deliberations . However, postponing the item to late November would put it almost at the end of the calendar.

(Mr. Seth, India)

16. In his delegation's view, item 81 should remain where it was or a slight adjustment of two weeks should be made, so that it would be taken up around the middle of October. Subsequent inputs arising from the deliberations of the World Bank and IMF could be taken into account during the debate on the resolution on the debt problem.

17. Mr. FALL (Senegal) said that, according to document A/C.2/46/L.1, no meeting of the Second Committee was scheduled for Monday, 28 October. No reason was given for that recess in the notes to the document. He asked whether any anything was taking place in the plenary on that date that might be of interest to members of the Second Committee, or whether that was simply a case of normal programming.

18. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Bureau would meet to study the questions that had been raised, including when to consider item 81 and the rescheduling of item 84 and its sub-items relating to special economic and disaster relief assistance. With respect to the proposal of the delegation of Norway to defer consideration of sub-item (c) of item 77 on the World Decade for Cultural Development, there would be no difficulty in postponing it until the afternoon of 6 November. That change would also include sub-item (j) of the same item.

19. As the representative of Nigeria had mentioned, considering items 78 and 79 on 11 November would pose a problem, since it would coincide with the meeting of the African ministers responsible for preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and the Bureau would consider the proposal to move the date to 18 November. Of course the final decision would have to be made by the Committee.

20. With respect to the proposal of Uganda concerning items 82 and 88, which were scheduled for consideration on 7 November, he said that those items were normally taken up after the Pledging Conference, which was to be held in late October or early November. Despite that practice, there was no rule governing the matter; and the decision was up to the Committee.

21. The Secretariat took note of the statement of the representative of Ghana and would act accordingly. In response to the observation made by the representative of Senegal, he said that no meeting was scheduled for 28 October because private arrangements had been made with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which would be meeting that day in New York. By cooperating with ECA, the Committee could use conference services on that day and hold the meeting, which would certainly be of interest for Africa and for many other delegations.

22. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Vice-Chairmen and the members of the Bureau should study those suggestions and report to the Committee on the results of their analysis on the following day.

23. It was so decided.

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

24. Mr. BLANCA (Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation) said that, although the cold war had been centre stage for 45 years, now that ideological opposition between East and West had lessened, the time had come to tackle the complex problems of eradicating poverty, protecting the environment and combating crime and drug abuse.

25. The world economy showed alarming signs of weakness. The countries that would ordinarily be expected to provide the impetus necessary to revive the growth of the world economy were still mired in recession or barely beginning to pull out of it. Economic growth had slowed in Europe. Germany, too, was experiencing economic difficulties resulting from the process of unification. North America had not yet achieved full recovery. In Japan, the economy had become less dynamic and was showing signs of fatigue.

26. The transition to a market economy in the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe was much more complicated than expected. The industrialized countries were barely beginning to realize the enormous cost of that transition. It was very possible that the industrialized countries would not have the resources to provide the needed material assistance.

27. To a certain extent, those upheavals had relegated the problems still being experienced throughout almost all of the developing world, but especially in Africa, to the back burner.

28. In September, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole had prepared the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The seriousness of the situation was clear. Per capita GDP had decreased by an annual 0.7 per cent across the continent. The drop in commodity prices had meant a loss of $50 billion in income and in the terms of trade over a five-year period. Outstanding debt had increased from $212 billion to $271 billion, and service on the debt had reached $23 billion in 1990. During the same period, the real value of net resource flows had shrunk.

29. The African countries and the international community must act immediately on a grand scale to curtail and reverse those negative trends. The Secretary-General had estimated that, for per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa to double to a meagre $700 a year, GDP would have to increase at an annual rate of 6 per cent. Many African countries were embarking on the difficult path of political and economic reform.

30. In addition to recognizing the effort made and the considerable progress achieved, those involved in the development of the continent ought to allocate more resources to finance that reform process. The partial successes were undeniable, but so was the bleak picture painted by overall figures on Africa.

(Mr. Blanca)

31. Economic troubles were not confined to Africa. In Latin America, with few exceptions - Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Venezuela - most countries were waiting for their economic take-off. In Asia, too, although the recently industrialized nations did provide a model, immediate action was needed to jump-start the economies of most countries.

32. The relationship between crisis situations and underdevelopment was becoming more and more obvious. The frequency and magnitude of those situations had caused great concern in the international community. Whereas there were 36 million refugees in 1990, today 1.2 billion people were living in absolute poverty. It was the responsibility of the United Nations to convince the public and the Governments that the underlying cause of crisis situations was underdevelopment and that, for the most economic utlization of their own resources, they should concentrate in the medium- and long-term on the factors that were widening the gap between the developed countries and the developing countries.

33. The developing countries were still labouring under the growing burden of their external debt, which had now reached the astronomical figure of $1.4 trillion and was the principal obstacle to their progress. The ratio between the external debt and GNP in all developing countries had risen considerably, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where it had gone from 93.4 per cent to 102.3 per cent for the period 1989-1990.

34. Although the debt reduction measures adopted in some cases by donors revealed a new concept of debt management, it must be recognized that they applied only to certain categories of debt and were not enough to produce the liquidity and investment that the debtor countries needed to reactivate their growth.

35. Many developing countries possessed abundant natural and human resources, but their exports depended on one or two basic products. The diversification which they needed to reduce their vulnerability should be accompanied by liberalization of international trade and by measures to open world markets to the developing countries' products. The Uruguay Round should help to resolve the problems that were so worrying to the developing countries. Many of those problems would be aired at the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held in Colombia in February 1992.

36. The interaction between population, growth and development was growing more and more important. Since 95 per cent of the 250,000 daily births occurred in developing countries, it was imperative to integrate demographic policies into long-term development plans. The population must be made aware, health and family planning services must be expanded and women must be given the means to bring fertility into line with economic realities.

37. Population explosion and poverty were two major factors in social problems and environmental degradation, as was clear from the controversies

over the destruction of forests and desertification. What better example of interdependence than the environment? The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) should therefore give equal attention to poverty and overconsumption, although hitherto debate had centred on the ecological dangers of industrialization. Obviously, there was an urgent need to curb emissions of poisonous gases that overheat the atmosphere and deplete the ozone layer and it was essential to complete the text of the framework convention on climate change so that States could subscribe to it at UNCED in 1992.

38. However, the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation had not been properly explained. The poor countries had to cut down their trees or burn their forests in order to survive. The debtor countries had to increase their exports, exploit their meagre natural resources and convert virgin land to commercial crops in order to pay their debts.

39. The vast world development enterprise called for a huge volume of capital. There was little chance, in times of unemployment and weak economies, of domestic savings increasing sufficiently to fill the gap and provide a surplus at world level. In order to increase the resources so greatly needed by both developing and developed countries, available resources would have to be redeployed and used judiciously.

40. The end of the cold war and the easing of tensions between East and West offered real prospects for diverting vast resources hitherto destined for military expenditure to economic and social development. Developed and developing countries alike must give priority to disarmament in the context of viable rules for regional and international security. The threat of mutual destruction which had maintained the balance of terror for 45 years now seemed meaningless. New dangers had taken its place, both nationally and regionally, which were even more terrifying because of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Gulf war, the longstanding troubles in the Middle East and the nationalist and ethnic uprisings in central and eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union showed how precarious and fragile peace was.

41. The United Nations should promote security agreements at world and regional levels. That would require a degree of confidence and transparency and, above all, reliable procedures and instruments, together with appropriate rules for disclosure and control of military expenditure, currently estimated at a trillion dollars. The United Nations was the most appropriate forum for elaborating and perfecting those procedures and instruments.

42. Once the modalities for world and regional disarmament had been decided on, regional and national objectives could be defined and resources channelled towards more productive ends - although there was clearly no hope that all the resources thus freed would be used for development. The problems of converting defence industries to civilian purposes and transformation in the nature of employment should also be borne in mind.

(Mr. Blanca)

43. None of those problems was insuperable and general disarmament obviously would free considerable resources for world economic growth. With those resources it would be possible to provide financial assistance to the countries most burdened by debt, transfer scientific and technical know-how and promote lasting and ecologically rational development, intensify diversification and restore the social services that had suffered from indebtedness and adjustment programmes.

44. In his annual report, the Secretary-General had mentioned his idea of convening an international conference on financing development, which could calculate the resources needed for economic development during the 1990s and define the means of mobilizing those funds.

45. It would be reasonable to think of preparing a framework for the progressive reduction of armaments in the next decade. At the same time, the United Nations should persuade the donor community that support for the development efforts of the developing countries would help to strengthen international peace and security, thus justifying new reductions in military expenditure. The problems of the environment, the drug traffic, AIDS, migration and crisis situations were matters of deep concern to the peoples and Governments of the developed countries. The United Nations could show that protection of the environment and lasting development were two sides of the same coin. The United Nations could also show that poverty was the main cause of the crisis situations and that even the effects of natural disasters could be reduced by sensible development programmes focused on preventive measures.

46. The world was facing enormous challenges, but they were in no way insuperable, because the international community had the resources needed to solve them. What was called for was an overall vision of growth, development and resource availability and needs followed by universal agreement on priorities. The United Nations was in a favoured position to give form to that vision and promote the collective action of the parties to the contract which must be drawn up in preparation for the coming millenium.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 1 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

GENERAL DEBATE

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7 October 1991

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

1. MR. AHMED (Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs) said that the drama of change unfolding in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had brought about a remarkable transformation in international relations. With the spread of democracy and freedom through all regions of the world, the diminished threat of nuclear conflict and the waning of ideological conflicts and great-Power rivalry, the world was on the threshold of a new era.

2. However, it was now essential to channel the energy unleashed by freedom to serve the cause of development and nation-building. Unrestrained ethnic, linguistic and religious conflicts threatened to undo the gains of freedom in many countries, and it would be perilous to dismiss those conflicts as isolated, sporadic phenomena. Freedom must be complemented by development and social justice if it was to be sustained over the long term. A unique confluence of factors suggested that those goals could now be achieved if all countries pursued them at the national level and the international community supported national efforts in a sincere and determined manner.

3. There was some evidence that the international community was prepared to seize that opportunity. An international consensus was emerging in support of a development style which recognized the need to promote individual initiative, entrepreneurship and investment, provide for the development of human resources, increase access to health and education, encourage active participation by the individual in the development process, eradicate poverty and preserve the environment. There was also agreement on the need for a more stable, equitable and growth-oriented international economic environment to support and sustain national development efforts and for all countries to reduce defence spending.

4. Yet there was insufficient evidence that individual countries and the international community as a whole were prepared to make the necessary policy commitments or to implement those commitments persistently. Despite the general commitment to higher growth, the global economy during the past two years had slowed significantly: the overall growth rate of global GNP had decreased from 3 per cent to 1 per cent in 1990 and world output was expected to fall in 1991, for the first time since the Second World War. Stimulation of the world economy must therefore be the international community's first priority, if the new development style was to succeed and stagnation in Africa and Latin America and the steep recession in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were to be overcome. The members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development should abandon their preoccupation with inflation, and all countries should consider significant reductions in defence expenditures; both of those steps would give Governments greater monetary and

fiscal flexibility and enable them to adopt a more expansion-oriented growth policies.

5. Steps must also be taken to make trade a more powerful engine of growth. The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations must therefore lead to a strong, more open multilateral trading system that provided growing markets, particularly for developing countries and countries in transition. For such countries, unhampered market access was far more critical than increased aid flows. As analysts had often pointed out, the developing countries' losses in export earnings from protectionist measures were greater than total aid flows to them. It was therefore essential to roll back the trend towards protectionism, managed trade and unilateralism. Regional unified markets such as those emerging in Europe and North America must be more open to the outside world.

6. It was also essential to reduce the external debt burden of heavily indebted countries. So far only a few had benefited from the application of the international debt strategy. A solution to the debt problem required not only additional resources, but also more uniform treatment of debtor countries and the expeditious completion of debt-relief negotiations on the basis of accepted principles.

7. A principal factor in the global slow-down in 1991 had been the unexpectedly substantial decrease in output in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, where incomes had fallen by 10 per cent or more as the complexities of the transition to a market economy had become increasingly apparent. Pessimism as to the chances of rapid stabilization and recovery was taking hold in many of those countries, and there was evident disappointment at the extent of international support for the transition. There was also widespread concern that linking international assistance to understandings with international financial institutions regarding stabilization programmes tended to bias assistance programmes towards balance-of-payments adjustment and demand management. Inadequate attention was being paid to major structural changes that should lay the micro-economic foundation for macro-economic stability.

8. Although the world economy as a whole had been able to absorb the immediate shock of higher oil prices and trade disruption engendered by the crisis in the Persian Gulf, the increased oil bill for energy-importing developing countries alone was estimated at $10 billion. Many countries with close commercial and economic ties to Iraq and Kuwait had experienced heavy financial losses and the Gulf region had suffered incalculable environmental damage. The impact of the crisis had been so substantial and complex that it was akin to a natural disaster of major proportions requiring an immediate and coordinated international response. The United Nations system must play a key role in developing a coherent approach to the entire range of economic, social, humanitarian and environmental issues raised by the crisis.

(Mr. Ahmed)

9. The developing countries as a whole had achieved unsatisfactory growth during the past year. Output was expected to grow by about 3 per cent in 1991, only marginally above the rate of population growth, resulting in an approximate increase in per capita output of 1 per cent. South and East Asia, despite a slow-down in growth from 6.3 per cent in 1990 to 5 per cent in 1991, remained the fastest-growing region of the world. In West Asia, higher growth in some countries had been offset by sharp declines in others, and the region as a whole had shown little growth in 1991. In Latin America and the Caribbean, output was expected to grow by less than 2 per cent. While some of the major economies of the region were realizing some growth after years of stabilization and adjustment efforts, the overall picture remained one of stagnating output and deteriorating living standards. The expansion of output in Africa was expected to be approximately 3 per cent in 1991, roughly the same as the population growth rate, allowing for no increase in per capita output. The energy-exporting countries of the region had fared better due to the temporary increase in oil prices, but energy-importing countries had experienced a decline in their per capita output. While economic reform efforts continued in many African countries, the results had yet to be translated into a sustained increase in output.

10. There were many causes for the acute and prolonged crisis in Africa, including rapid population growth. Yet there was no reason why human resources could not be the principal source of growth in Africa, as they had in other continents which had experienced similar demographic trends. However, the most devastating factor affecting growth in Africa had been the external shocks of the 1980s. As a result of falling commodity prices, the terms of trade of African countries had declined so seriously during that decade that, by the decade's end, annual resource flows had been approximately $30 billion less than they would have been had the terms of trade remained the same throughout that period. That figure was twice the amount of all foreign aid received by Africa each year, and efforts to make up the shortfall had been very modest. It was time to renew and fully implement the commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). The African countries themselves must remain steadfast in their commitment to economic reforms and restructuring.

11. The problems of the least developed countries - the majority of which were in Africa - had become more acute, and there was an urgent need to translate into reality the various international commitments which had been made over the years to ameliorate their structural impediments.

12. To meet the growing capital needs of the developing countries and countries with economies in transition, international efforts should be made to facilitate those countries' access to the world's capital markets on terms appropriate to their development profiles. For their part, those countries must develop their own credit and financial institutions and create a stable legal and institutional environment that encouraged, rather than stifled,

entrepreneurial and investment activity. In order to promote financial sector development in the developing countries, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs was implementing an international programme on savings and credit, which brought together savings and credit institutions from developed and developing countries and international development finance institutions for policy-oriented research and development projects. The Department had also launched a programme on entrepreneurship in economic development in response to mandates from the General Assembly. A number of regional symposia on enterprise and financial sector development were planned for Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America during 1991-1993.

13. The relationship between environment and development was recognized throughout the world, and it was incumbent upon each member of the international community to consider what it could do to preserve the environment while meeting the legitimate aspirations of its people for development and a better life. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) should be an occasion at which self-examination, genuine understanding of the concerns of others and, above all, patient and diligent efforts might lead to agreements and arrangements for dealing with the entire spectrum of issues relating to environment, resources, technology and development. His Department was actively supporting the preparatory process for the Conference. In that context it had launched a project to study alternative technologies and their long-term growth and environmental implications and was developing an integrated environmental statistics and accounting system.

14. In conclusion, he pledged the full cooperation of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs in tackling the complex and difficult tasks facing the Committee during the current session.

GENERAL DEBATE

15. Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the opportunities for improved inter-State relations created by the ending of the ideological division between East and West could only be realized if the States Members of the United Nations discarded their cold-war prejudices and sought to understand one another's concerns.

16. Despite the copious literature that existed on the subject of development and the numerous important conferences that had been held on that topic in recent years, serious development problems persisted, particularly in Africa. The original enthusiasm generated by the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) had yielded to despondency in the face of the Programme's evident failure.

17. The euphoria resulting from the collapse of socialism had diverted the industrial countries' attention from their shared responsibility with developing countries and from the need to promote balanced growth in the world

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

economy. The developing countries, whose peoples had borne the brunt of injustices perpetrated in the name of ideology, hoped that the world would remember that one of the aims promulgated at Bretton Woods in July 1944 was to ensure that countries remained aware of the repercussions of their actions on others.

18. The developing countries were calling for such bodies as the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to address issues that normally fell within the purview of the Bretton Woods institutions because those institutions were not empowered to define the international political context in which they functioned and, furthermore, did not represent the democratic practices which the developing countries were being enjoined to emulate. Moreover, the unfavourable economic conditions in which the developing countries were forced to operate made a review of international political and economic structures imperative.

19. Many developing countries had undertaken structural adjustment measures to facilitate their integration into the world economy. Their development objectives had been rendered attainable by the improved world political climate and technological progress. Their national policies were well in place but would have to be complemented by appropriate international policies, which could only be formulated in a political forum like the General Assembly.

20. The developing countries hoped that the successful and speedy conclusion of the Uruguay Round would strengthen the open multilateral system and counteract protectionist tendencies, for a properly functioning multilateral trading system was the best guarantee of overall balanced economic growth. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) should serve as the focal point for dialogue between developed and developing countries on questions of trade and development. Consequently, UNCTAD must be included in the reform and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields.

21. At its eighth session, UNCTAD would be meeting for the first time in the post-war period in an atmosphere of eased political tensions and renewed hope for international cooperation. UNCTAD must assess the current international economic situation and trends, identify specific problems facing many developing countries and identify priority measures to address those problems. The outcome of that session would boost the efforts of the developing countries to tackle the economic challenges facing them.

22. It should be stressed, however, that all the efforts made in various international forums to tackle the problems of development were more likely to prove effective if conducted within the framework of international policies which recognized the interdependence of all countries, developed and developing alike.

(Mr. Awoonor, Ghana)

23. The Group of 77 had on various occasions underscored its needs and its desire to be integrated in international efforts to deal with a broad range of issues of relevance to the Second Committee and the Group would continue to raise its voice in defence of its just demands. The tentative efforts which poor countries were making to establish democracy had come under siege, largely because those countries did not receive adequate returns for their exports, were denied access to technology on intelligent concessionary terms, were overburdened by crippling debt or were virtual charity cases as they coped with the crushing impact of grim social problems. It was not enough merely to institutionalize multi-party pluralism and proclaim a free-market system. Those who advocated stringent adherence to the ideological prescriptions of Western capitalist democracy must not remain deaf to the developing countries' call for a just global economic order.

24. Mr. PRONK (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the large-scale human suffering and massive environmental damage caused by the Gulf war had had a serious impact on economies all over the world. In addition, internal conflicts and natural disasters had resulted in massive population flows in many regions.

25. At the same time, encouraging political developments in Central and Eastern Europe and in Africa, combined with increased global cooperation in development, had led to a wider acceptance of the common responsibility borne by all countries to work together to find durable solutions. That responsibility extended to the socio-economic field, as social and economic cooperation was essential to a secure and harmonious world.

26. The problem of external debt continued to impede long-term development prospects. Proposals on measures for further debt alleviation had been submitted by members of the European Community and discussed in the Paris Club. At their recent London summit meeting the seven major industrialized countries had agreed on the need for additional debt-relief measures, far exceeding the relief granted under the Toronto terms, for the most heavily indebted countries and had called on the Paris Club to take prompt action. Such substantial measures could genuinely enhance the economic prospects of the poorest countries.

27. Commodities remained the main source of export earnings for many developing countries; accordingly, the European Community had reformed its compensatory mechanisms, Stabex and Sysim, in order to boost efforts by developing countries to diversify their commodity exports and increase their earnings. The Community also sought to revitalize and upgrade existing commodity agreements, harmonizing them with market trends, and to make its common agricultural policy more compatible with liberalized markets for agricultural products.

28. The successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round by the end of 1991 would improve the developing countries' economic prospects and would result in a

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

reinforced multilateral trading system. With regard to the concept of an international trade organization, the European Community looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on the subject but believed that it was important to build on past achievements, notably the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had formed the cornerstone of the European Community's trade liberalization efforts over the years.

29. Sound domestic policies were also essential to the concept of common responsibility, and an encouraging consensus was emerging in the world on the political systems and policies necessary to achieve sustainable development. There was also growing recognition of the need for full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, for democratic, pluralistic and responsive government which encouraged the broad participation of men and women in the development process and created an economic environment conducive to private initiative, for accountability, transparency and acceptance of the rule of law and for maintaining security without excessive military expenditure.

30. Sustainable development could only be achieved through policies and institutions built on local and national traditions and cultures. A proper balance should be struck between the public and private sectors, with Governments withdrawing from highly productive areas in order to improve the functioning of others, such as health, education and human development. Policies should respect individual rights while creating room for sustainable development; they should make effective use of available national and international resources and thereby elicit a greater commitment from donor countries to development cooperation. In the absence of such good government, developing countries could hope only for the sort of humanitarian relief offered by international and non-governmental organizations.

31. The European Community reaffirmed its commitment to assisting countries in the process of economic adjustment and political change and pledged increased support for institution- and capacity-building and for new initiatives that would enhance sound economic policies aimed at sustainable development. The Community and its individual member States would bear their share of that common responsibility by increasing financial flows to developing countries and working to attain the agreed United Nations targets for official development assistance, particularly to the least developed countries. The urgent requirements for capital investment in and assistance to Central and Eastern Europe would not undermine that effort.

32. The concept of common responsibility was especially relevant in dealing with large-scale emergency situations. The protection and physical well-being of displaced persons and the root causes of massive population flows, as well as their effects on the countries of origin and the recipient countries, were matters of particular concern. More attention should be paid at both the national and the international levels to the prevention of natural disasters. All countries shared responsibility for ensuring that emergency assistance was channelled promptly and efficiently, and recipient countries had a responsibility to facilitate humanitarian relief efforts.

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

33. It was therefore vital to improve the emergency response capacity of the United Nations, which was best placed to play a pivotal role in any humanitarian emergency situation. At the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1991, the European Council had formulated some suggestions for strengthening the Organizations's emergency response capacity. Since that time, the European Community had further elaborated those ideas in a paper that was being circulated among delegations in an effort to begin informal discussions on the matter.

34. The world economy was rapidly outgrowing its ecological base, and environmental issues could not be neglected in economic decision-making. Sustainable development should deal simultaneously with economic development, ecological sustainability and access to natural resources. It was common knowledge that both poverty and affluence could lead to environmental deterioration. On the one hand, the rich consumed a disproportionate share of the world's resources and discharged their waste in quantities that exceeded the ecosystem's absorptive capacity. On the other hand, the poor in a number of developing countries overexploited their resource base just to stay alive.

35. The European Community was fully committed to the achievement of a concrete and action-oriented outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Specifically, the Conference should result in: the signing of conventions on biological diversity and climate change and of a global consensus on forests that could serve as a basis for a convention on forests; the adoption of Agenda 21, which should be an evolving global programme of action with specific objectives and targets and timetables; the adoption of an Earth Charter, which should contain a number of key principles and general rights and obligations in the field of environment and development; the drafting of recommendations for strengthening and further developing institutional arrangements in the field of environment and development; and decisions on financial resources and technological cooperation to assist developing countries.

36. Further measures must be taken to alleviate the strain imposed on the planet's ecosystem by reducing both the consumption of energy and other resources and the quantity of waste produced. The developing countries in particular needed additional financial resources to strengthen their capacity to deal with global environmental challenges. The recently established Global Environmental Facility could play a central role in that respect. New and innovative ways of financing from both public and private sources had to be found at both the national and international levels.

37. Apart from financial flows, improved technological cooperation, provided through market mechanisms and on concessional and preferential terms, would be necessary. Access to information and capacity-building, including training, were key factors in the dissemination of environmentally sound technology, in which the private sector in the industrial countries could play an important role.

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

38. Institutional machinery in the field of environment and development should be strengthened, and consideration should be given to the establishment of a regular high-level meeting or other mechanism, preferably at the ministerial level, to provide general policy guidance for implementation of the proposals for action resulting from UNCED and to consider possible gaps. It was important that any solution should help to integrate environment and development more effectively and should be related to the evolving Global Environmental Facility.

39. With regard to the improvement of inter-agency coordination, the European Community supported new arrangements that would strengthen the authority of the Secretary-General. During the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, various delegations had proposed the establishment of an environment and development board at the highest level; that idea merited further consideration.

40. The Gulf crisis had shown that the supply and price of oil remained vulnerable to political shocks, and the financial and economic effects on certain countries, particularly the developing countries, had been great. The crisis had underscored the importance of continued efforts by Governments to reduce their vulnerability to disruptions in oil supply. Energy security could be further enhanced by a range of measures and policies that included the improvement and timely testing of emergency response mechanisms; the maintenance of diversified energy supplies, both in terms of fuel and sources; the exploitation of all economically and environmentally appropriate opportunities to promote energy production worldwide; the promotion of energy efficiency and conservation and the use of renewable sources of energy; and support for research and development, the introduction of new technologies and the further development of competitive markets and liberalized trade.

41. Since the crisis had led to improved relations between producers and consumers, contacts among all market participants might be further developed to promote communication, transparency and the efficient working of market forces. The European Community noted with satisfaction that the preparation of a European energy charter was well under way. The International Energy Agency was also considering ways of improving contacts with consumers and producers.

42. At its resumed forty-fifth session, the General Assembly had taken a first step in restructuring the Organization's social and economic sectors. However, much more must be done to enable United Nations to provide opportunities for addressing new social and economic issues of interest to the international community and for in-depth discussions of cross-sectoral development issues. The existing mandates of the bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system must be streamlined, with particular attention given to eliminating overlaps, and the subsidiary structures of both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should be rationalized. The roles of various agencies which dealt with technology

(Mr. Pronk, Netherlands)

transfers, foreign investment and trade must be more clearly defined and consideration should be given to the expertization of certain subsidiary bodies.

43. Coordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies must be improved, and the role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should be strengthened. Intergovernmental bodies should function more efficiently, and overlaps in the agendas of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly should be eliminated, as should overlaps in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board. Finally, the operational activities of United Nations funds and specialized agencies might be streamlined and their management and governance improved.

44. Ms. TOMKINSON (Australia) said that recent events had demonstrated the impact that political developments could have on the international economy. In particular, the political changes and the restructuring of the economies in Eastern and Central Europe had provided the international community with opportunities both to assist in the process and to take advantage of the expansion of long-term trade and investment opportunities. However, it was important that such efforts should not take place at the expense of the developing countries' needs.

45. The best way to enhance the prospects for growth and development in the developing countries would be to expand opportunities for international trade opportunities on the basis of fair and equitable trade rules. Accordingly, the success of the Uruguay Round should be given the highest priority on the international economic cooperation agenda. If the Round was allowed to fail, the effects would extend far beyond the confines of the international trading system and the costs would be far greater than the foregone opportunities for market expansion.

46. The importance of trade in the development process was complemented by the role of development assistance. While trade was vital to economic growth, development assistance could help to promote equity and alleviate poverty. Appropriate poverty alleviation programmes not only enhanced the lives of individuals but also made them more powerful consumers, savers and producers, thus contributing to overall economic growth. Poverty alleviation was also the essential starting point for mitigating many pressures on the environment in the rural areas of developing countries.

47. The new awareness of the close interdependence of environment and development would increasingly affect economic policy-making in the 1990s and succeeding decades. Developing countries were more vulnerable than others to environmental degradation, faced significant costs in adapting and had the strongest motivation to find ecologically sustainable models of economic development. Environmental issues were thus economic development issues, and the United Nations had a central role to play in enabling the international community to address the related issues of environment and development.

(Ms. Tomkinson, Australia)

48. Her delegation attached great importance to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to the success of the Conference itself, as well as to negotiations on the drafting of conventions dealing with climate change and biological diversity. Australia was committed to fostering cooperative, balanced and practical approaches in those negotiations, in particular with respect to such key cross-sectoral issues as funding and the transfer of technology.

49. It was up to individual countries to adopt appropriate domestic policies for economic reform and restructuring. Greater emphasis on strategies to reduce deficits and improve creditworthiness, encouragement of entrepreneurship, the opening of economies to market forces, human resources development and the reduction of non-productive government expenditure were all important means of improving development prospects in the 1990s. The protection of human rights and the promotion of human freedoms were vital for ensuring the requisite conditions for creativity and individual enterprise essential to economic development.

50. While it was widely recognized that the political activities of the United Nations had entered a new period of revitalization and accomplishment, the Organization had never been as effective in the economic and social sectors. Having stagnated, the economic and social policy organs of the United Nations had never exercised the influence and authority that the founders of the United Nations had anticipated. The resumed forty-fifth session of the General Assembly had produced a practical and wide-ranging package of adjustments which, if properly implemented, should make an important contribution to the long process of revitalizing the Organization's economic and social activities. Her delegation looked forward to further progress in that effort and would support measures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization's response to emergencies through the improved coordination and strengthening of agency capacities.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
4th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 2 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. SINCLAIR (Latin American Economic System) said that, recently, at the XVIIth Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, the governing body of SELA, held at Caracas, the process of consultation and coordination within the framework of SELA in relation to the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations was considered under the theme of international trade. That process had enabled the 26 Latin American and Caribbean States members of SELA to present a united front and joint proposals.

2. He referred to the Latin American Coordination Meeting held in Caracas in August and September in order to prepare the regional position for the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

3. SELA had proved to be a valuable forum for consultation and coordination among the countries in the region in their relations with third countries and groups of countries. In that connection, he wished to draw attention to the activities in connection with the America's Initiative, the preparation of projects within the framework of the cooperation agreement with the European Community, the monitoring of the situation in Eastern Europe and the launching of a coordination process for relations with Japan.

4. In conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Permanent Secretariat of SELA had been preparing a proposal for industrialization policies and measures which would be submitted to Governments at the regional conference on industrialization, to be held in Caracas in October.

5. Several years earlier, the Latin American Council had initiated a process of analysis and decision-making on intellectual property which had culminated in 1989 with the establishment of the Latin American and Caribbean Forum on Policies and Intellectual Property. At the two meetings held by the Forum, member States of SELA had been able to coordinate their policies with respect to the negotiations currently taking place within the framework of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), harmonize legislation on the protection of intellectual property rights and copyrights in the region and outline a programme of regional cooperation.

6. Major strides in Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) had been made in Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of SELA, including the establishment of an information system on TCDC (INFOSELA) at the Permanent Secretariat.

(Mr. Sinclair)

7. The Latin American Council had considered the subject of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development and had expressed concern over the restrictions placed by the developed countries on exports from developing countries in the name of environmental considerations.

8. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA was promoting the exchange of experience and information in order to determine mechanisms which would foster the convergence of the various regional integration processes, which was essential to the enhancement of the region's growth, development and international competitiveness. Since its inception in 1975, SELA had cooperated with specialized agencies, organizations and programmes in the United Nations system, particularly with ECLAC. That cooperation would be strengthened and broadened under the cooperation agreement recently concluded by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

9. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the relaxation of political tension between East and West, there had been no progress on the economic front. For years, recession, the increasing debt burden, net transfer of resources, poverty, malnutrition, plummeting commodity prices, balance-of-payments deficits and protectionism had prevented developing countries from reactivating their growth and diversifying their production.

10. Ironically, while the developing nations were being encouraged to adopt market-oriented economies and diversify their exports, protectionism was denying them access to international markets. There must be a multilateral trading system which was free from discrimination and protectionism, and which would facilitate greater participation by the developing countries in line with their comparative advantages. Regional economic integration imposed restrictions on free trade. In order to mitigate the negative impacts of those policies on developing countries, their exports must benefit from preferential treatment.

11. Export earnings from raw materials were vital to growth and development. In many cases, they were the only source of income fueling a country's economic development. Negotiations must be opened between producers and consumers of raw materials in order to create a fairly priced market free from manipulation by the developed countries, which gave rise to instability and price fluctuations. National efforts to resolve economic problems, however vigorous they might be, could not be sustained without the help of a favourable economic environment. The international economic climate was not yet capable of responding to the needs of the international community. The existing system must therefore be reformed so that developing countries could devote their actual and potential resources to the task of their own development.

12. Developing countries had been forced to halt their development programmes in order to repay their external debt. A comprehensive and durable strategy

(Mr. Ziaran, Islamic Republic of Iran)

to reduce both the volume of debt and debt servicing must be formulated urgently. The flow of financial resources to the developing countries had dwindled sharply in the past decade. Now, most of those resources were directed towards the advanced nations. While the resumption of foreign investment in developing countries must be encouraged, official development assistance must also reach the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

13. The proposed international conference on development financing for the developing countries could serve as a launching pad for the resumption of growth and development in those countries. Opportunities for economic and technical cooperation among developing countries must be exploited more effectively. The United Nations system and donor countries could play a significant role in that connection.

14. The negotiations during the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been discouraging. Little attention had been devoted to issues of interest to the developing countries, for example, the transfer of technology and financing mechanisms. In order for the outcome of the Conference to be positive, mutual interests must be duly taken into account during the negotiations.

15. Political developments had given rise to the hope that resources once devoted to military rivalry would be used to solve the economic problems of developing nations. That had not been the case, partly because the world was still viewed through the old prism. Highly political international issues took precedence over the economic problems of developing countries, which were deemed to be peripheral. Many people died of hunger, malnutrition and lack of health care, without anyone noticing. Moreover, the developed nations had shown themselves to be reluctant to address the problems of concern to the developing world.

16. In order to change the situation, political will was an essential requirement, not resolutions or declarations which were dishonoured or left unimplemented. The eighth session of UNCTAD would offer a unique opportunity to address international economic problems in a way that would rectify the shortcomings mentioned and create a favourable and just environment in which the developed and developing countries could attain their economic and social goals.

17. Mr. LAVROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the spectacular advance of democracy in an ever-increasing number of countries and regions of the world had led to a major reappraisal of what only a short time earlier had been viewed as an immutable political axiom. Furthermore, the failure of a planned economy which disregarded fundamental economic laws had been conclusively proved beyond all reasonable doubt. Sweeping changes designed to establish a market economy must rank first and foremost among the concerns of the United Nations, which should reorient its own programmes in support of that process.

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

18. For the first time in the history of mankind, the opportunity existed to create genuine interdependence with in a global economic system that would provide a decent standard of living for all nations. A case in point was the reintegration of the Soviet Union into world economic structures. It was not an exaggeration to say that the USSR was beginning a new era in its development. A treaty for the union of sovereign States was being prepared and new organs of government for the transition period had been established. The desire of almost all the Republics to maintain their economic ties and to participate in the establishment of an economic union was the major source of hope for the future and an important stabilizing factor. The key points of the union treaty, which would be signed in October 1991, were a harmonized economic policy, a common legal regime for economic activity, a system of free enterprise and private property, use of the rouble as common currency in a unified monetary system and coordination of foreign trade and foreign exchange policy, with a view to integrating the Soviet economy in the world economy, the treaty would thus provide the guarantees the outside world required to maintain relations with the USSR.

19. The Republics would participate equally in the economic union with a view to creating a common market. The union would not be an amorphous entity, but would have a common budget and central authorities: an interrepublican economic committee, a banking union (composed of central banks) and an arbitration tribunal. The union would assume responsibility for all of the Soviet Union's existing external economic commitments.

20. In order to achieve those objectives, however, steps must be taken without delay to ease the country's economic hardships, in an effort to lay the economic basis for democratic change. The interrepublican economic committee, which would oversee all matters regarding cooperation between the USSR, the Republics and third countries, would meet as appropriate with the Soviet Union's trading partners to promote international cooperation in the reform process. Greater cooperation with multilateral economic organizations and the economic bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations was expected.

21. The first steps had been taken on the long road towards a new world economy, and a consensus was emerging on the objectives, principles and basic methods of ensuring social and economic progress: a market economy, a democratic society, eliminating the burden that military expenditure placed on the economy, giving the economy a more ecological orientation, and reliable mechanisms to establish social safety nets for those who needed them.

22. It was a source of satisfaction that the United Nations had assisted in the development of a new philosophy of economic cooperation with the adoption by consensus of the Declaration of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. The United Nations should have a major political role in attaining such goals as "economic détente", the elimination of disparities in the global economy and poverty eradication. United Nations involvement should

(Mr. Lavrov, USSR)

be focused on areas where the Organization had a comparative advantage over other multilateral mechanisms. The United Nations should not compete with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which controlled most multilateral resources and had wealth of expertise and experience in economic reform. For its part, GATT had established a constantly improving set of rules to regulate international trade flows and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with those rules.

23. The principal task of the United Nations was to facilitate harmonization of the economic interests of the entire international community. Without question, global and regional stability and security were possible only with a sound economic base. That concept should be reflected in the specific programmes of the United Nations system and in closer links between the Organization's social and economic activities, on the one hand, and its humanitarian and peace-keeping activities, on the other.

24. Another priority for the United Nations was to secure agreement on approaches to the formulation of optimum development models which encouraged respect for human rights. The efficiency of assistance programmes sponsored by the United Nations, especially in the humanitarian sphere, should be greatly enhanced without delay.

25. The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly must help make the United Nations economic activities more effective and productive. The legacy of the cold war, which had hindered the Organization's activities in the economic and other fields, must be left behind. In 1991, the Second Committee should reach consensus on questions on which a solution was close at hand and should make every effort to strike a balance among the priorities of various States and groups of States. The current session should promote cooperation with the USSR in such areas as entrepreneurship, environmental protection, problems created by the Chernobyl accident, the coordination of emergency assistance and enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities. His delegation expected that pertinent recommendations would be made to solve the problems of external debt, international trade, development and poverty. Efforts to restructure the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system should also be continued.

26. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) said that the major changes on the international political scene offered a unique opportunity for strengthening international cooperation. Although the post-war political map had been discarded, economic and social disparities between developed and developing countries continued to grow deeper. The dangerous trend towards a concentration of economic growth must be reversed. The old ideological bipolarity might well be replaced by a division between the North, rich in capital and technology, and the South, poor and without prospects.

27. Some steps had been taken to solve the serious problem of external debt, which hindered growth in the majority of developing countries. Many

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

developing nations had adopted radical policies to open up their trade which had not met with an adequate response from the major participants in international trade, and serious distortions and obstacles remained to the achievement of an open and non-discriminatory system of international trade. The Uruguay Round of GATT should conclude within a reasonable period of time, and its outcome should reflect a balance among the 15 negotiating groups.

28. In a time of major change, the United Nations had embarked on an exercise of adaptation and strengthening. Mexico supported that exercise, which should strengthen the multilateral system and reaffirm the major principles of international law enshrined in the Charter. Mexico was ready to participate in that reform process in order to create a strengthened and flexible United Nations. The search for solutions to the long-standing problems of development should continue, without prejudice to questions such as the environment.

29. Mexico attached great importance to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Greater flexibility and political will must be displayed in order to achieve substantive agreements that would protect the interests of current and future generations. To overcome the profound economic, social and technological inequalities that marked the international scene, an atmosphere of cooperation and firm political will was required. The trend towards an internationalized economy must be enhanced, and every effort must be made not to lose the opportunity to make interdependence a mutually beneficial equation. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which had begun on 1 January 1991, should guide the efforts of the community of nations and the organizations of the United Nations system with a view to rendering international cooperation increasingly just and participatory.

30. Mr. DORANI (Djibouti) said that the international community, which sought to ensure its collective security, should also endeavour to ensure general prosperity. Developing countries, especially the least developed, urgently needed economic assistance from the richest countries.

31. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had stated that, to meet the most basic needs of 30 million Africans threatened by hunger, 5.5 million tons of food would be needed. Yet, barely 3.5 million tons of food had been promised by organizations and donors. At the London Economic Summit held by the seven major industrialized countries in July, a declaration in support of the countries of the Horn of Africa affected by natural disasters had been made; the United Nations Secretariat had then bolstered the declaration by holding a donor conference in New York.

32. Specific proposals were required so that Africa might extricate itself from its economic morass. The United Nations Programme of Action for Economic Recovery and Development in Africa 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD) called for concerted

(Mr. Dorani, Djibouti)

efforts by the countries of the region and the international community. It also posed a real challenge to the entire United Nations system, which in 1990 had provided Africa with more than 50 per cent ($1.5 billion) of its total aid, as compared with 40 per cent ($1.1 billion) in 1986. Despite all progress made, much remained to be done. The few positive effects UNPAAERD had had on African economies had been counterbalanced by the negative effects of limiting factors, both internal and external. Africa suffered from the effects of structural problems, difficult budget situations, meagre export growth, deteriorating terms of trade, unfavourable climatic conditions, local conflicts and major migrations of refugees, problems with which this country was familiar.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.